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SIPDIS

PLEASE PASS TO EUR/SCE AND PM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/09/2019
TAGS: PREL MARR MASS HR
SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON SECURITY
DIALOGUES

REF: A. STATE 112900
 B. STATE 102518

Classified By: Peter D'Amico, Pol Officer, for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. In response to ref A request, Croatia enjoys a variety of security dialogues with the United States -- bilaterally, regionally, and multinationally. The security dialogues the United States has with Croatia are through NATO, the Adriatic Charter, the Southeastern Europe Defense Ministerial, Bilateral Defense Consultations with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the National Guard State Partnership Program with Minnesota, and EUCOMQ's Military to Military Program, as well as through the Embassy's Political Section, Office of Defense Cooperation, and Defense Attaché Office. End Summary.

NATO

¶2. (C) As a member of NATO since April 2009, Croatia engages in security discussions in both multilateral and bilateral forums with the United States as part of its participation in the Alliance. One of the key areas of dialogue involves NATO's operations in Afghanistan, since Croatia has almost 300 troops in ISAF. As part of its participation in ISAF Croatia deploys three Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) including a Combined Combat Support OMLT with their state partner, the Minnesota National Guard. In addition, the Croatian Air Force deployed two helicopters and 20 airmen to KFOR in July 2009, which allows Croatia's to demonstrate its commitment to regional stability. Overall, Croatia participates in 15 NATO, EU, and UN peacekeeping operations around the globe.

Adriatic Charter

¶3. (C) Croatia and the United States engage in security dialogue as partners in the Adriatic Charter. The Adriatic Charter promotes the stability and Euro-Atlantic integration of countries in Southeastern Europe by bolstering political, defense, and economic cooperation among the partners and between them and their neighbors. Croatia and the United States signed the Adriatic Charter in May 2003. Other partners include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Montenegro. Serbia has observer status. Chairmanship of the Adriatic Charter rotates every six months, but the United States has not historically served as the Chair. The Chair, at its discretion, typically hosts one event for Foreign Ministers and Defense Ministers as well as meetings at Deputy Secretary or Under Secretary level. The United States usually sends a lower level representative than the other members. The last high-level meeting among Foreign Ministers (ref B), with a U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary, was on the margins of the UNGA in New York in September 2009.

This dialogue is useful since it promotes Euro-Atlantic integration in the region as well as encouraging Croatia to take a positive and active role on security issues in South Eastern Europe. This dialogue played a successful role in assisting Croatian and Albanian efforts to join NATO.

SEDM

14. (C) The United States and Croatia are members of the Southeastern Europe Defense Ministerial (SEDM). The other members are Turkey, Greece, Romania, Ukraine, Slovenia, Italy, Bosnia, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Albania, Serbia, and Montenegro. Moldova and Georgia participate as observers. Ministerials are typically held twice a year and the host rotates every six months. The last meeting was in Sofia in October 2009 with a U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense in attendance. SEDM allows countries in the region to engage each other on security issues relevant to South Eastern Europe in a neutral forum. It also provides the United States with an opportunity to further promote Euro-Atlantic integration in the region.

Bilateral Defense Consultations

15. (C) The United States has Bilateral Defense Consultations (BDC) between the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Croatian Ministry of Defense. These are scheduled to be annual consultations, however, the last one took place in 2006 in Minnesota. There is a BDC scheduled to take place in Zagreb in early 2010. The hosting responsibility rotates between the United States and Croatia. The consultations are useful opportunities to discuss important bilateral military issues between both sides.

National Guard State Partnership Program

16. (C) Croatia also enjoys a National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP) with Minnesota. The State Partnership Program between Croatia and Minnesota began in 1996. While there is no formal security dialogue as part of the program, it helps promote bilateral security relations. An example of the direct benefits of the SPP is the Combined OMLT in ISAF that

the Croatian Armed Forces currently has deployed with the Minnesota National Guard.

EUCOM's Military to Military Program

17. (C) One of Croatia's main avenues for direct military contact with the U.S. military is the Mil-to-Mil program. The program is the mechanism through which the Croatian MoD and each of the services can request specific opportunities for units to interact. The annual scheduling conference is held in March or April. The program helps identify and meet specific needs of the Croatian military to be able to enhance its interoperability with the U.S. and other NATO allies.

18. (SBU) Embassy Zagreb, in addition to having a polmil officer, has ODC and DAO offices that play a vital role in military to military discussions between the two countries.

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